

Virginia Beach Mobile Unit Guidelines*

Part I Definitions, References and Purpose

Article 1 Definitions:

Commissary: A catering establishment, restaurant, or other place in which food, food containers or supplies are kept, handled, prepared, cleaned or stored for distribution to satellite operations. This facility must be approved and inspected routinely by a regulatory authority. ***A domestic kitchen may not serve as a commissary.***

Depot: An approved site or station where potable water is replenished and sewage is properly disposed.

Pushcart: A non-self propelled vehicle without utilities that serves a restricted menu and returns in its entirety to a commissary each operational day.

Self-contained Mobile: A unit that retains all required utensils/equipment and meets all food establishment regulations including a mobile water supply and approved sewage disposal capability.

Stand: A non-restaurant, non-mobile structure which may or may not be hard connected to water or sewage, returns food contact utensils/equipment to a commissary, with the exception of work surfaces and equipment that must be cleaned in place, and serves a restricted menu. This excludes stands temporarily erected for special events. These operations must obtain a special events permit.

Restricted Menu: Consist of the following for service only:

- Non-potentially hazardous foods that require minimal hand contact
- Condiments commercially prepared and packaged
- Individually packaged or pre-wrapped foods prepared commercially or in a commissary
- Pizzas commercially prepared, delivered and pre-cut
- Nachos, Popcorn or Pretzels
- Any additional food items which are approved and documented by the regulatory authority.

Restricted Mobile: A non self-contained unit with some required equipment, reports to a commissary, is not hard connected to water or sewage and serves a restricted menu.

Article 2 References:

VBDPH: Virginia Beach Department of Public Health

BOCA: Building Officials and Code Administration

Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations: Law(s) in the state of Virginia governing food establishments. Chapter 12 VAC 5-421, March 2002, published by the Virginia Department of Health - Office of Environmental Health Services

Virginia Beach City Ordinance Article I. Food Service Managers Certification: Virginia Beach city code governing the requirements for Certified Food Managers (CFM) in food establishments. Code includes sections 13-1 through 13-9 of Article I.

Article 3 Purpose:

This document has been developed to specify the following requirements in order to protect public health:

1. A procedure to obtain a permit to operate a mobile unit
2. Criteria for assuring the safe preparation, handling, protection and/or temperature control of food for public consumption
3. Criteria for the safe and sanitary storage, operation, cleaning and use of equipment
4. Requirements for toilet and cleansing facilities for food employees

Part II Regulations

Article 1 Permit, Unit and Equipment Procedures:

1. Mobile food units, pushcarts and stands must have a Virginia Department of Health (VDH) permit to operate. To obtain a permit the operator must submit a completed application, menu, operation description, site plan/picture, schedule - including hours of operation, location and time of stops, Restroom Facility Agreement for non-mobile units, a Commissary / Depot Agreement from the commissary and all requisite fees must be paid to the VBDPH. The mobile unit permit, with some exceptions, is issued from the city/county health department where the commissary or depot is located.
2. Storage of food and related items in outbuildings must be at the commissary or in close proximity to the unit site and the location and contents must be submitted with an application and/or permit and approved by the regulatory authority.
3. An inspection is required prior to the issuance of a permit. Allow three to five (3-5) working days for scheduling when calling for an opening inspection.
4. The unit operator must notify the VBDPH if there are changes in the following: menu, hours of operation, months of operation, location of stops, commissary, outbuildings, bathroom facility or in the physical establishment, including renovations and/or additions.
5. Any unit hard connected to approved water must be connected to an approved sewage service and meet all food establishment requirements documented in the current Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations and must obtain all the proper approved connections and equipment.
6. Food contact equipment and utensils of mobile food units, pushcarts and stands must be easily portable for transport back to the commissary.
7. All restricted mobile food units, pushcarts and stands must report to their commissary each operational day for the following:
 - (a) Washing, rinsing and sanitizing of the mobile's utensils and equipment in the three-compartment sink
 - (b) Refilling with a supply of potable water and properly disposing of waste water.
 - (c) Restocking supply of food, clean utensils and equipment.
 - (d) Preparation of commissary prepared foods.
8. Self-contained mobile units must report to their approved depot as necessary.
9. Mobile unit water tanks shall meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Constructed of approved materials that are safe, durable, corrosion resistant, non-absorbent, smooth and has an easily cleanable surface.
 - (b) Shall be an enclosed system, sloped to drain.
 - (c) If designed with an access port, it shall be protected and secured.
 - (d) Shall possess "V" threads only when a hose is permanently attached.
 - (e) Tank vents shall be protected.
 - (f) Inlets and outlets shall be sloped to drain and protected.
 - (g) Any hoses used shall be of approved construction and clearly identified.
 - (h) A filter shall be provided if compressed air is used for pressurizing.
 - (i) An approved protective cover or device shall be provided for any inlets, outlets or hoses.
 - (j) Tank inlet shall be ¾ inch in inner diameter and provided with a hose connection of a size and/or type to prevent use of any other service.
 - (k) Tank, pump and hoses shall be flushed and sanitized before service, after construction, repairs, modification and/or periods of no use.
 - (l) All pumps and hoses shall be equipped with backflow prevention.
 - (m) If not in use, all inlets, outlets and hose fittings shall possess a protective cover or device.
 - (n) Tanks, pumps and hoses shall be dedicated for conveying drinking water and no other purpose.

Reference sections 12 VAC 5-421-2360 through 12 VAC 5-421-2490 of the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations for detailed requirements.

10. Water necessary for operation shall meet the following requirements:
- (a) Obtained from an approved source.
 - (b) System shall be flushed and sanitized before service, after construction, repairs, modification and/or after any situation that may introduce contaminants.
 - (c) Bottled water shall be from an approved source.
 - (d) Water shall meet quality standards.
 - (e) Non-drinking water shall be used only if approved and only for non-culinary purposes such as cooling.
 - (f) Water from a non-public supply shall be sampled annually.
 - (g) Non-public supply sample reports shall be maintained and filed in the establishment.
 - (h) Water source or system shall be sufficient to meet water demand and generate enough hot water for peak demand throughout the unit.
 - (i) Water shall be provided under pressure.
 - (j) Water may be provided through containers of commercially bottled water, portable water containers, water transport vehicles, water storage tanks or a protected hose connection to an approved source

Reference sections 12 VAC 5-421-2050 through 12 VAC 5-421-2160 of the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations for detailed requirements.

11. Sewage holding tanks for mobile establishments shall be 15% larger in capacity than the water supply tank and be sloped with a drain that is 1 (one) inch in inner diameter and has a shut-off valve (12 VAC 5-421-2500). Sewage shall be disposed of through a public sewage treatment plant or an individual sewage disposal system according to law (12 VAC 5-421-2570).
12. Wastewater generated by melted ice, condensate and other sources must be collected and properly disposed of in an approved manner (12 VAC 5-421-2580).
13. Restroom facility must be onsite or within proximity according to BOCA requirements and approval for use of facilities must be documented with the regulatory authority (12 VAC 5-421-3130).
14. Any unit with window and/or doors must protect the opening against the entry of insects and other vermin by providing tight fitting, self-closing doors and tight fitting windows. If the opening is opened to ventilate, 16 mesh screens, air curtains or other effective means must be used to protect against entry (12 VAC 5-421-2930).
15. The potential for insects, rodents and other pests shall be controlled by routinely inspecting deliveries, inspecting the premises for evidence of pests, utilizing means of proper pest control and eliminating harboring conditions (12 VAC 5-421-3270).

Article 2 Food and Equipment/Utensil Handling Procedures:

1. All food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, unwrapped single service or single use articles must be stored, dispensed and transported in a protective manner (12 VAC 5-421-610 / 620 / 690 / 470 / 2000 / 2010 / 2020).
2. Individually prepared and packaged foods must remain in packaging for storage, heating and service.
3. Food employees shall not contact exposed ready to eat foods (i.e.: cooked meats, pizza, condiments, etc....) with bare hands but must use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves or dispensing equipment during all aspects of food handling (12 VAC 5-421-450).
4. Potentially hazardous foods that have been heated and held for daily use shall not be cooled and reheated for reservice. All potentially hazardous foods held hot for service must be discarded at the end of the workday. Operators that wish to reserve food must obtain approval from the regulatory authority, must possess adequate facilities to properly cool and reheat foods and shall maintain written procedures that outline proper food handling techniques during the cooling and reheating process.
5. Open foods, such as condiments (chopped onion, relish, etc.), must be applied by an approved dispensing method or by the operator. Customer self-service of condiments from open containers is not allowed (12 VAC 5-421-660).
6. Foods must be protected at all times from walk-up customers via the use of sneeze guards or other barriers (12 VAC 5-421-650).
7. Mobile food units must provide only single-service articles for use by a customer (12 VAC 5-421-1740).
8. Mobile food unit operators serving potentially hazardous foods must provide and utilize a calibrated food thermometer, numerically scaled from 0°F. to 220°F, that is accurate to $\pm 2^\circ\text{F}$. The thermometer must be cleaned and sanitized before and after use (12 VAC 5-421-1180 / 1510 / 1730 / 1780).
9. During operation single use, disposable paper towels or approved commercial moist disinfecting towelettes/cloths must be provided and used for wiping food spills on kitchen-ware and food contact surfaces. Cloths may be provided and used for wiping food spills but must be stored in an approved sanitizing solution and a chemical specific test kit must be provided for the sanitizing agent. (12 VAC 5-421-570 / 1530 / 1720 / 3380).
10. Packaged food, such as wrapped sandwiches, may not be stored in direct contact with ice. Ice, if used for food storage, must be self-draining (12 VAC 5-421-530).
11. Potentially hazardous foods may be prepared for service in a self-contained mobile unit if during storage, transport, preparation, chilling, heating, holding and service, the food is protected from contamination and meets the proper cooking temperatures (12 VAC 5-421-700). Potentially hazardous foods must be held at 140°F or greater or 41°F or less at all times (12 VAC 5-421-820).
12. Self-contained units that serve potentially hazardous foods prepared in the commissary shall hold and transport food in bulk or in individual servings at 140°F or greater or 41°F or less (12 VAC 5-421-820).
13. Utensils must be properly stored and utilized for dispensing commissary prepared foods. An adequate supply of utensils must be kept on the unit as in-use utensils must be replaced with a clean and sanitized utensil a minimum of every four (4) hours during operation (12 VAC 5-421 550).
14. All operations using time as a public health control for a working supply of potentially hazardous foods (PHF) are displayed or held in service for immediate consumption: (12 VAC 5-421-850)
 - (a) Shall provide and maintain written procedures in the food establishment and make available to the regulatory authority upon request to ensure compliance with this regulation.
 - (b) Shall mark or otherwise identify the food to indicate the time that is four (4) hours past the point when the food is removed from temperature controls.
 - (c) Shall cook and serve PHF or discard PHF within four (4) hours from the point when the food is removed from temperature controls.

Article 3 Supervision and Personal Hygiene Procedures:

1. Food manager certification is required of all mobile food unit operators unless written exemption has been approved from the VBDPH (12 VAC 5-421-60 and Virginia Beach City Ordinance Article I Section 13-4).
2. The person in charge shall ensure proper establishment operations are conducted, employees are following correct procedures and are trained in food safety as it relates to their assigned duties and safe food handling techniques and procedures are understood and followed (12 VAC 5-421-70).
3. Mobile food unit operators must wash their hands and the exposed portions of their arms in a handwashing lavatory before starting work, after driving to each stop, during work (as often as necessary to keep them clean) and after smoking, eating, drinking or using the restroom. Commercial purchased chemically treated disinfecting towelette/wipes may be substituted for hand cleansing for defined stands, pushcarts and/or restricted mobiles (12 VAC 5-421-130 / 140 / 160 / 170 / 2230).
4. Mobile food unit operators must wear clean outer clothing and hair restraints (12 VAC 5-421-210 / 240).
5. While preparing food, food employees may not wear jewelry on their arms and hands (12 VAC 5-421-200).

*** These guidelines apply to all mobile units or defined units within this document which are constructed or under new ownership and are applying for a permit after March 1, 2002.**

